

to live unthreatened lives but the security of the British Empire was at stake. Security means more than the defence of our possessions against direct attack. It denotes also effective resistance to a state which clearly threatens our lives and liberties before it becomes too powerful for us to effectively resist.

XIX. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The twenty years between the two great wars form one of the most depressing chapters in the history of British diplomacy. If our victory had been used with reasonable intelligence, the whole story would have been different. The Allies, after winning the war, lost the peace. The main problem through-out was Germany, the most formidable, industrious and highly organized nation in Europe, who was certain to recover her strength. It was the task of British and French statesmen to avert another catastrophe in one of the only two possible ways. The first was the path of reconciliation, implicit in the Fourteen Points and eloquently outlined in Mr. Lloyd George's Memorandum of March 25, 1919. It was in this direction that the average easy-going Englishman, when the passions of war began to cool, instinctively desired to travel. It would have involved such steps as the admission of Germany to the League at its foundation or soon after, the fixing of reparation demands at an amount capable of being paid within a generation, the implementation of Article VIII of the Covenant concerning disarmament, and the return of some colonial territory under a mandate. Such a policy would-doubtless have been interpreted in some German quarters as evidence of weakness of will, yet many millions of Germans, including the majority of the manual workers and war-weary veterans, were ready, for a new deal. . Was it beyond the resources of

statesmanship to
guide our old foe along the road of democracy and
international
co-operation, to make the growing generation
feel that life
was not intolerable for the citizens of a defeated
country ?

The rival policy, favoured by the majority of
Frenchmen
and based on the assumption that Germany
under any regime
is an incorrigible offender, consisted in
depriving her of the
means to aggress, not merely during the first
years of peace
when she was weak from loss of blood, but for
the time further
ahead when she had recovered her spirits and
her industrial
strength. The tragic events of 1940 have helped
us to under-
stand the French demand in 1919 for the
permanent control